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23 August 1960

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West Germany: [Following conversations with Chancellor Adenauer and Foreign Minister Brentano, West German Ambassador to Moscow Hans Kroll feels it now is virtually certain that no Bundestag meeting will be held in Berlin before November. In a radio speech on 21 August, West Berlin Mayor Brandt again demanded such a meeting be held despite Soviet threats to sign a separate East German peace treaty. Although Brandt claimed British support for his position, the British Government has recently indicated opposition to the holding of the Bundestag meeting in Berlin in the near future on grounds that this might provoke the USSR.]

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DAILY BRIEF

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*Laos: [Premier Souvanna Phouma, Lao Army commander General Ouane, a representative of rebel Captain Kong Le, and the United Nations deputy representative in Laos arrived in Savannakhet on 23 August to attempt to reach a settlement with General Phoumi, leader of the counter coup group. They presumably will stress the danger that rebel paratroop Captain Kong Le, whose troops control the Vientiane area, will join forces with the pro-Communist Pathet Lao dissidents if Phoumi persists in attempting to nullify the coup. The degree of present collusion between Kong Le and the Pathet Lao is unclear, but General Ouane has stated that talks have been held and that the "Pathets would attack Phoumi's forces for us" in any move against Vientiane. There are indications that General Phoumi hopes to set up a rival government at his headquarters in Savannakhet, where nearly a quorum of National Assembly deputies thus far have rallied.] []

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DAILY BRIEF

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Situation in Laos

[Premier Souvanna Phouma, accompanied by Lao army commander General Ouane, a representative of rebel paratroop Captain Kong Le, and the United Nations deputy representative in Laos, flew from Vientiane to Savannakhet on 23 August for negotiations with General Phoumi, leader of the countercoup movement. Presumably, the delegation will stress the danger that rebel paratroop Captain Kong Le, whose troops firmly control the Vientiane area, will join forces with the pro-Communist Pathet Lao dissidents if Phoumi persists in attempting to nullify the 9 August coup and succeeding developments.]

[The high-level composition of this delegation should facilitate the task of reaching a compromise settlement of differences. However, Phoumi may still question the extent of Souvanna's real authority, and may have in mind the creation of a rival government to challenge the Souvanna regime, which he considers illegal. The gravitation of Lao VIPs to Savannakhet continues. Prince Boun Oum Na Champassak, inspector general of the kingdom, arrived on 21 August via Thailand after flight from Vientiane. Leaflets dropped in Vientiane on 22 August requested pro-Phoumi deputies to re-form the National Assembly at Savannakhet. The arrival of three more deputies reported en route from Vientiane would bring the unofficial count of deputies at Savannakhet to 25, or five short of a quorum.]

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[The bulk of the 800 battle-hardened troops of Kong Le's 2nd Paratroop Battalion reportedly have set up a defense perimeter several miles outside Vientiane, and Pathet Lao elements apparently are also in blocking position astride road and river approaches to the capital.]

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[REDACTED] General Ouane told the American army attaché in Vientiane on 22 August that "the Pathet Lao would attack Phoumi's forces for us" if an attack were made on Vientiane.]

[The degree of present collusion between Kong Le and the Pathet Lao is unclear. General Ouane confirms that talks have been held but states that no liaison exists. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Estimates of Pathet Lao strength in the Vientiane vicinity vary from several hundred to 2,000; the lower figure is believed more accurate.] [REDACTED]

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